



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

AUGUST 24, 2021, MEETING NOTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Dan Bartman	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Late</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Absent</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by acting Co-Chair, Daniel Bartman at 6:04pm and adjourned at 8:59pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the minutes from July 20, 2021.

PUBLIC MEETING: 40 Trull Street

(continued from July 20, 2021)

The applicant team gave a brief overview of the proposal that was presented at the last meeting and which designs were recommended by the Commission. The owner's asked for flexibility with final cladding options. The applicant presented color palette options.

The Commission agreed that the owner can choose the cladding and color palette.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that the design guidelines in the NR district relating to windows were met.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 394 McGrath Highway

The applicant team presented a 14 unit apartment building with a common roof deck. They spoke to the landscaping on the roof deck, as well as around the property. The applicant team presented their preferred façade option, as well as façade option 2 and 3, which have different materiality, but the same form for the building across all three façade options.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the proposed materiality options, the lack of connection between the base columns and the rest of the building massing, how to create a better pedestrian experience, the close proximity of the windows to the adjacent buildings, the irrigation of the landscaping, and the front setback. Acting Co-Chair Bartman made some suggestions on how to make building design more cohesive within its context. The Commission voiced concerns regarding bike parking and security. They also discussed the possibility of street trees in front on the building.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: 71 Union Square

The applicant team presented a visual material review of 71 Union Square as part of a condition of a previous Planning Board decision for this project. The Planning Board requested that the final materiality selection be reviewed and commented on by UDC prior to getting a building permit.

Member Valdes liked the palette and overall materiality approach taken. He felt the flemish bond should be reflected with recesses to create shadow lines and the solder course feel at top of the building should remain.

Member Talun said the tone and color of brick will help differentiate, but compliment the building from abutting buildings. He wondered if the cornice at the top of the building should also have red brick like a lower part of the building.

Acting Co-Chair Bartman asked if there was a predetermined height of the cornice between the first and second floor. Applicant said the height was pre-determined because of zoning. Acting Co-Chair Bartman told the applicant team to pay attention to the width of that cornice, as to not make it too thick.

Member Valdes said that making a high detailed rendering of design would help show materiality of the building better. The applicant said he is happy to provide a profile section rendering of the building.

Member Talun agreed that the midlevel cornice feels too large. He also asked what type of glass will be used on the ground story. As part of a Planning Board decision, several conditions were made in terms of the glass treatment. Member Talun also asked the applicant team to think about the type of lighting fixtures that could be used on the ground story.

PUBLIC MEETING: 1 McGrath Highway

The applicant team presented a 6-story hotel that runs through the Somerville/Cambridge line. They reviewed the site plan, the vehicular access, as well as hotel programming. They presented three different massing options, with option 3 being the preferred option and three façade options, with option 1 being the preferred option. They spoke about the landscaping plan, street trees, and the green roof.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the landscaping under the bike ramp on the Cambridge side of the lot, the lack of development of the bike ramp, who would be responsible for building the ramp to the community

path, and whose jurisdiction it is to approve the design – Somerville or Cambridge. The applicant team stated that there is a signed commitment from the 1 McGrath development team and the 15 McGrath development team to fund, design, and build the ramp that connects the community path.

The Commissioners feel that the landscaping plan, massing options, façade designs, the bike parking, and the renderings all need to be developed further.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

The meeting went into recess at 8:20pm. The meeting was called back to order at 8:25pm.

PUBLIC MEETING: 1153 Broadway

The applicant presented the current 2-story building, which they are proposing to add 2 more floors to. They presented the materiality options, such as window treatments, stonework, and brick. They plan to maintain the existing cornice and add another cornice on top of the building. They are also proposing to add a roof deck.

The Commissioners and applicant discussed the possibility of a required elevator to meet ADA standards, the alley behind the building, and landscaping opportunities. The Commission asked for clarification on compliance before they vote. They also asked if the applicant could have their architect provide a code compliance report, including ADA and access concerns.

The Commission and applicant discussed the façade design and materiality options.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.